

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Last night, the United States Senate voted overwhelmingly to begin debate on comprehensive immigration reform legislation and is expected to continue consideration through the week after the Memorial Day district work period. Representative Xavier Becerra (CA-31), Assistant to the Speaker of the House and the only member from Southern California on the Ways and Means Committee, was encouraged by the Senate's cloture vote and remains cautiously optimistic that Congress can enact a comprehensive immigration reform package this year.

Today, Rep. Becerra issued the following statement on the Senate immigration debate:

“Comprehensive immigration reform legislation must place a high priority on keeping families together, as well as ensuring that new workers do not become a permanent underclass. In addition to strong, effective border and workplace enforcement, and a tough, realistic earned path to citizenship, we must all keep economic and humanitarian issues top of mind. When we keep families separated and workers in a state of uncertainty, we only perpetuate the failures of the current system. I urge Senate members to consider enhancing the bill by giving higher priority to family re-unification and providing a legal path to permanent residency for future immigrant workers.”

A former member of the House Judiciary Committee, Rep. Becerra is intimately aware of the various intricacies of the oft-misunderstood immigration issue. When considering immigration legislation, Rep. Becerra always adheres to the principles of the [Congressional Hispanic Caucus](#). Those principles are:

- **Strong family re-unification.** Any immigration reform must place a high priority on keeping families together, including reducing backlogs.

- **Strong, effective border and workplace enforcement.** Strong border security is critical, but must not be done at the expense of human and civil rights, international cooperation, input from local border communities, or the protection of the environment. Unscrupulous employers should not be able to exploit cheap labor at the expense of wages and working conditions of all workers.

- **Earned legalization for the undocumented.** The path to earned legalization must be tough and realistic for the current undocumented to pay appropriate restitution and fully integrate into the economic and social fabric of our nation.

- **Legal permanent residence for workers that come in the future.** Immigration reform must reflect the economic needs of our nation, as well as ensure that new workers are not a permanent underclass without hope of fully integrating into society.

- **Honors our proud history as a nation of immigrants.**

Rep. Becerra is an original [co-sponsor](#) of the CHC-endorsed STRIVE Act ([H.R. 1645](#)).

[Becerra.House.gov](#)